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Oregon

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071518

August 2, 1999

Mr. Rich Holten
U.S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations
P.O. Box 550, MS: HO-12
Richland, Washington 99352

Mr. Michael Graham
Bechtel Hanford, Inc.
33350 George Washington Way
Richland WA 99352

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Dear Messrs. Holten and Graham:

I appreciate your response to the question I posed on behalf of the Oregon Hanford Waste Board (Board) at the June 7, 1999, System Assessment Capability (SAC) Work Group meeting. Specifically, I asked for a list of all the onsite activities that had changed as a result of the Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project. Your June 14 response, however, fell short of the Board's expectations.

You identified seven "Key Accomplishments" in your response. Of the seven, Item 2 is the only one actually describing an onsite activity (Item 2) that has "changed" as a result of the more than 18 months of effort and \$5 million spent on the Integration Project.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to ask the question once again. What onsite activities have changed as a result of the time and money put into the Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project? This should include what new requirements have been placed on U. S. Department of Energy (USDOE) personnel and contractors as they proceed with cleanup activities. This list should identify only those programs already in place.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Sautter
Hanford Project Specialist
Nuclear Safety Division

Enclosure

c: Mary Harmon, USDOE Headquarters
Patty Yraguen, OHWB Chair



071518**GROUNDWATER VADOSE ZONE INTEGRATION PROJECT****Key Accomplishments to Date
June 14, 1999**

1. A Long Range Plan has been developed for the System Assessment Capability (SAC). The SAC is the first holistic assessment of radionuclide and chemical impacts from waste disposal practices throughout the Hanford Site using a broad spectrum of human, ecological, cultural, and socioeconomic metrics. It will explore and explain the fate of Hanford derived chemical and radiological contaminants as they move through the soil, into the groundwater and then enter and impact the Columbia River and its users and natural systems. Work has begun on conceptual models for the SAC's five technical elements, which include Inventory, Vadose Zone, Groundwater, River, and Risk. The principles of the Columbia River Comprehensive Impact Assessment (CRCIA) Part II document are being used to structure and conduct the SAC (i.e., development of candidate sets, clear statement of assumptions, open Science & Technology (S&T) issues, and consideration for representing uncertainty).
2. Subsurface characterization work is being coordinated and integrated across the site. For example, using boreholes for multiple purposes is saving money and time. At Gable Mountain Pond, one borehole will serve the needs of Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) monitoring and 200 Area soil characterization.

Also, characterization has been initiated at the Tank Farms. The Groundwater/Vadose Zone (GW/VZ) Integration Project influenced the prioritization of work at the Hanford Site to assure this work was initiated in FY99 and coordinated with other efforts.

3. A scoping study on the contaminant inventory for the site has been completed and a report of results has been drafted. For the first time, inventory information from all sources has been assembled into a single database. This will allow disposal inventory estimates to be compared with estimates of the total mass of radiological material produced on site, along with estimates of the total mass of chemicals brought on site. The comparison will be used to identify missing information and instances where the mass of a contaminant has been counted multiple times.

This is the first step toward the development of an inventory based on mass for all disposal and remediation sites. Such an inventory will become the basis for a consistent assessment at both the site-wide and site specific scales.

4. Dependency Webs for the SAC have been developed for the assessment of risk and impact. Dependency webs identify the resources, their uses and functions at selected locations where contamination and impacts are likely to occur. The

GROUNDWATER VADOSE ZONE INTEGRATION PROJECT

Key Accomplishments to Date June 14, 1999

dependency webs will help to identify what is important to assess. The project is also redefining the risk and impact metrics evaluated to gauge the consequences of past and future Hanford Site disposal and remedial actions. A broader view of risk and impact from Hanford operations is being taken. In addition to a broader spectrum of human and ecological health metrics, including Native American scenarios, the metrics being developed include the impacts on cultural and socioeconomic resources of the region.

5. A Science and Technology (S&T) Roadmap has been prepared to begin to integrate Hanford's projects needs with S&T planning and funding processes. Additional funding will be brought to Hanford to meet some of the subsurface science needs identified by the S&T Roadmap.
6. An Expert Panel has been convened to provide peer review to the GWVZ Integration Project. Four meetings, and several sub panel meetings have been conducted.

This panel provides rigorous technical review of Hanford's projects related to vadose zone, groundwater, Columbia River and risk assessment needs.

The Expert Panel meetings are open and provide for public, Tribal, State of Oregon and regulator involvement.

7. An open forum for the public, State of Oregon, Tribes and regulators was created to provide regular and ongoing interaction with the GWVZ Integration Project Team and subsurface issues across Hanford.

Twice per month the Open Project Team meets to address questions, discuss project issues and products, and then prepare and widely distribute meeting minutes. Department of Energy representatives from across Hanford and at Headquarter participate in these Open Project Team Meetings. A GWVZ Integration Project web site was created to provide access to project documents, meeting minutes, calendars, etc.

In addition to the Open Project Team meetings, ongoing Work Groups meet to address technical and policy issues.